



Thursday 20 May 2010

COALITION ALCOHOL PLANS WELCOMED BY SCOTCH WHISKY MAKERS

UK Government alcohol policy, outlined in the Coalition's programme published today, has been warmly welcomed by The Scotch Whisky Association (SWA).

The Coalition Agreement includes commitments to:

- 'review alcohol taxation and pricing to ensure it tackles binge drinking without unfairly penalising responsible drinkers, pubs, and important local industries', and
- 'ban the sale of alcohol below cost price'.

The SWA has long called for a review of the excise duty system and a ban on sales below cost, with a view to introducing a fairer and more responsible regime, where all drinks are taxed according to alcohol content.

The industry has argued that a UK-wide ban on sales below cost - based on excise and VAT - should be considered as a simple and transparent way to stop loss leading alcohol sales.

Gavin Hewitt, Chief Executive of The Scotch Whisky Association, said:

"The new Government's alcohol plans are a very positive step, which will be widely welcomed by Scotch Whisky distillers. The UK's discriminatory alcohol duty system is no longer fit for purpose and undermines the Scotch Whisky industry's competitiveness. There is no more important local industry. It is time for a fairer and more responsible system that taxes all alcohol on the same basis, according to alcohol content.

"A commitment to ban below cost sales of alcohol is welcome, allowing loss-leading to be addressed. All parties should unite around these plans. This would offer a legal, proportionate alternative to stalled minimum pricing proposals in Scotland."

Note to Editors:

1. For further information please contact Campbell Evans (0131 222 9231 and 07768 002 262) and David Williamson (0131 222 9230 or 07730 496 151) at the SWA.